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THE HUMAN BEING VS. THE ACCURSED DEVIL

LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF AYYUB, THE PROPHET (a)

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Inspiration from the Stories of the Qur'an

- ◆ Why use a story?
 - Stories have special attraction
 - Puts deep concepts in context that we can “touch-and-feel”
 - Example: Story of Prophet Uzayr and Concept of Resurrection
 - Everyone can understand
- ◆ Qur'anic stories are:
 - Best of stories – Yusuf (12), 3
 - Factual – Aal Imran (3), 62
 - Reveal the Truth – Kahf (18), 13
 - Concerned with message and relevant information, not simply history
 - Applicable throughout all time and for all people

About this Class

- ◆ Exploration of the story of Ayyub (a) from Qur'an and *ahadith*
- ◆ Purpose of this class:
 - Draw inspiration and lessons from his story
 - Develop a richer appreciation for the Qur'an and its stories
- ◆ About class:
 - Source for material
 - Dependence on Qur'an and Ahadith
- ◆ Class format
 - Interactive nature
 - Asking questions

Ayyub, a Seeker of Allah (a)

- ◆ Prophet of Allah
- ◆ Al-An'aam (6), 84: Descendent of Nabi Ibrahim (a)
- ◆ Ayyub = One who is restored to health, blessings, family, and wealth, or one who is *Awwaab* (oft-returning to Allah)
- ◆ Known as Job in the Hebrew Bible
- ◆ Gravesites in Turkey, Oman, Palestine (Wikipedia)

The Devil

- ◆ Iblis: Name of jinn who refused to bow to Adam (a)
- ◆ Shaytan: Anything or anyone who takes you away from Allah , including:
 - Iblis
 - Other jinns
 - People (see al-An'aam (6), 112)
 - Evil forces of the soul
- ◆ The oath of Iblis: I will surely misguide them all except Your exclusive servants!
 - Analogy in *40 Hadith*
- ◆ Skills of the shaytan:
 - Making evil look good
 - Inviting towards evil acts
 - Creating fear of loss and poverty when someone is determined to do good
- ◆ Iblis doesn't always get involved!
- ◆ Uneven odds - al-A'araaf (7), 27

Background to Revelation of Story in Qur'an

- ◆ Ayyub (a) appears in Surahs: al-Nisaa (4), al-An`aam (6), al-Anbiyaa (21), and Saad (38)
- ◆ Muslims were facing difficult times in Makkah
- ◆ Surah al-Anbiyaa' and Surah Saad were revealed in Makkah as consolation for the Muslims
 - Sura al-Anbiyaa': One of a number of stories used to defend the position of the Prophet (s)
 - Sura Saad: One of a number of stories mentioned in context of Prophet being asked to have *sabr*

ROUND 1

Shaytan is Jealous

- ◆ Ayyub (a) has a large flock, lands, and many children
- ◆ Very charitable
- ◆ Consistent in `ibadah
- ◆ Angels praise Nabi Ayyub (a) in heaven
- ◆ Shaytan eavesdrops and becomes jealous of Ayyub (a)

Practical Point 1:

***Sabr* - in Good and Bad Times**

- ◆ Definition of sabr: Self-restraint
 - When faced with difficulty
 - When resisting sin
 - In performing acts of worship
- ◆ Al-Ma'aarij (70), 19 – 21
 - Applies in good and bad times
 - Patience is a result of *Tawhid*
 - Being covetous (هلوع = *haloo`*) can be used to soar towards perfection
 - Fruits of patience: Drives someone from being جزوع (*jazoo`* = anxious) and منوع (*manoo`* = grudging)

Practical Point #2:

Eavesdropping of the Shaytan

- ◆ Al-Hijr (15): 16-18
- ◆ Eavesdropping = إستراق السمع (*Istiraaq al-Sam`*) for the purpose of finding out about
 - Secrets of creation
 - Future events
- ◆ Analogy explains rule of universe: Access to higher knowledge depends on the purity of the heart
 - Al-Ankabut (29), 43 + al-Faatir (35), 28
- ◆ Practical lesson: Exposure to information vs. Believing and Benefiting. Examples:
 - Reading Qur'an
 - Spiritually uplifting lectures
 - Du'a for studying
 - Rare sciences

ROUND 2

Waswasah

- ◆ *Waswasah* of the Shaytan to make Nabi Ayyub (a) busy with the *dunya* and heedless about worship
 - Ayyub (a) is ma'soom
 - Remains thankful for his blessings
- ◆ Definition: Whisperings in the heart that incline someone towards evil
- ◆ Angelic inspirations vs. Satanic whispering
 - Good feeling about going to mosque
 - Memory of deceased *marhum*vs.
 - Provocative images
 - Memory of someone annoying
- ◆ Lesson for for any seeker of Allah who takes a few steps towards Him

Practical Point:

Defense Against Waswasah

- ◆ Defense strategy: Remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*)
 - Al-A'araaf (7), 200-201 – How to not be blinded by the Shaytan
 - Example of gold in pocket
 - Highest form of *dhikr* is in action (not just verbal)
 - Best way of combatting uneven odds is to enter into the fortress of Allah
 - From Du'a Kumayl: ارحم من رأس ماله الرجاء و سلاحه البكاء
 - Story of Shaykh Rajabali Khayyat

ROUND 3

Destruction of Wealth and Property

- ◆ Shaytan makes an appeal to Allah
 - Why does Allah accept his request?
- ◆ Taking away his material wealth and property
 - Farm burnt down
 - Flock of animals died
- ◆ Ayyub (a)'s response:

● الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَعْطَاهُ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَخَذَهُ

- *All praise is due to Allah who granted me these blessings and all praise is due to Allah who took them away.*
- How someone else might have responded

Practical Point:

Patience through Thankfulness

- ◆ Special station of those who are patient
- ◆ In difficulty focus on what we have vs. what we don't have
- ◆ Dua from the month of Rajab
- ◆ Story of Nabi Isa (a) and the old woman

ROUND 4

Death of Children

- ◆ Death of Nabi Ayyub's children
 - Tears of Nabi Ayyub (a)
 - Is this is conflict with Yunus (10), 62 and other verses?
 - Prophet (s) and death of his son Ibrahim (a)
 - Tears of compassion vs. tears of anger and complaint
 - Complaining about one's problems to Allah is praiseworthy
 - Hadith of Sham`oon

ROUND 5

Sickness

◆ Illness

- Unable to move (but no mental illness)
- Responding to myth of having a repulsive physical sickness:
 - Logical proof
 - Proof from traditions
- Lasted 7 years

◆ Practical point: Representatives of Islam (scholars, mentors, teachers, ...) should take care about their outward appearance

Practical Point:

Why do Good People face Difficulties in Life?

- ◆ This world is a place for being tested
- ◆ No one exempted, not even prophets (‘Ankabut (29), 2-3)
 - Hadith of Imam Sadiq (a)

• إِنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ بَلَاءً الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ

 - Of all people, the prophets face the most difficulties and afterwards, those who rank right after them according to their status
- ◆ Allah is All-Merciful (And My Mercy encompasses all things – A’araaf (7), 156)
 - Difficulties are blessings in disguise
- ◆ Perfection is obtained through overcoming obstacles
- ◆ Good life ≠ life free of difficulties
 - Example of wealthy person losing a bit of money
- ◆ Examples of balaa’: Loss of children, poverty, trouble from others, difficulty of stopping a sin

ROUND 6

Mocking and Gloating of Enemy

- ◆ Mocking and suspicion of his former companions turned enemies
 - Forced to reveal a bit of his own worship
 - Most difficult test he had to face
 - Who is a true friend?
 - One person's test can be a test for the community

Practical Point:

How low will Shaytan stoop?

- ◆ Shaytan is out to steal:
 - Faith
 - Reputation
 - Hadith of 11th Imam (a): Beware of the evil of one who regards himself to be irrelevant and worthless.
- ◆ Universal law of action and reaction applies to more than physical phenomena. Examples:
 - Teasing someone for a sin
 - Forcing someone into homosexuality
 - Looking at non-mahram

ROUND 7

Test from Spouse

- ◆ After years of illness, only Ayyub (a)'s wife remained
- ◆ Shaytan appears as a doctor in front of her
 - Oath of Nabi Ayyub

FINAL ROUND

Nabi Ayyub's Entreaty to Allah

- ◆ Surah Anbiya (21), 83 and Sura Saad (38), 41
 - Nabi Ayyub only asks when permitted to do so
 - Despite so many odds against him, never lost hope in mercy of Allah
 - Three components of mercy: generosity, knowledge, and power
 - Not entreating Allah would have been a form of battling against Him

Allah's Response to Nabi Ayyub

- ◆ Allah answered his plea (Saad (38), 42-44)
 - Restored family multiple fold
 - Fulfillment of oath
- ◆ Titles of Nabi Ayyub (a) in the Qur'an:
 - *Awwab* (Oft-returning to Allah)
 - *Saabir* (One with *sabr*)
 - *Ni`m al-`Abd* (The excellent servant)

How to Cope with Difficulties

◆ The power of faith

● المؤمن كالجبل الراسخ لا تحركه العواصف

● A believer is like a firm mountain unshaken by strong winds and storms.

● From Surah Sharh (94):

● فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا / إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Indeed ease accompanies hardship.

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Questions

- ◆ Why is it easier to understand a concept when it is explained using a story?
- ◆ Why do fictional stories have limited value?
- ◆ What is the purpose behind the stories of the Qur'an?
- ◆ What is intended by the Shaytan not being allowed to accesss heavenly skies?
- ◆ What is our best weapon against the tactics of the Shaytan?
- ◆ Didn't the tears of Ayyub (a) conflict with his being *ma'soom*?